Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

"The Light of God surrounds you,
The Love of God enfolds you,
The Power of God protects you,
The Presence of God watches over you,
Wherever you are, God is."

Volume V February 1954 Number 1

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER
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A PSALM OF THE NEW YEAR

Oh God, our Father, Thou hast been gracious to us
And brought us to the threshold of another year.
The year just closed is in Thy keeping.
It is wrapped in Thy love; it is hidden away in Thy secret recordings.
The good and true, and beautiful will live on.
The impure and selfish will be burned up in the fire of Thy cleansing.
We leave all to Thy mercy and redemptive love.

And so we enter this new year unhampered.
We thank Thee from the depths of our hearts
That Thou dost give us another chance.
We praise Thee for the manifestation of Thy power and love
In the days that are gone.
And we praise Thee for Thine eternal promise
For the days ahead.
For Thou hast said: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."
"As thy days so shall thy strength be."
"My peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you."
And in the strength of these promises
And the confidence of Thine eternal faithfulness
We enter the new year unafraid.
We enter the new year with hope and courage,
With inspiration and anticipation,
With consecration and rededication;
For we know that living in Thy Presence
And under the shadow of Thy wings
Every day will grow sweeter
Every task will be more beautiful
Every word and thought will bear the stamp of Heaven
And be used to glorify Thy name on earth.

--*Wildred Long.*

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WHAT'S THE USE OF PRAYING?

By Robert Wells Youngs, D. D.

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Tennyson wrote these lines. Christian people, members of the church, do you believe them? Are they true? Is there any use in praying?

It all depends upon what you expect of prayer. If you expect prayer to turn God into what Dr. Albert Day has termed:

". . . . the Manager of a Celestial Lost and Found Bureau, the President of an Eternal Insurance Company guaranteeing policy holders against all loss by fire, lightning, tornado, earthquake, theft, changes in the weather accident, sickness, bad guesses on Wall Street--a kind of London Lloyd's moved up to heaven; . . . . a sleepless nurse whose business it is to cater to insomnias and hypochondriacs, a dog leading the indolent blind through the crowded ways of life, delivering them from the necessity of using their brains and from all possibility of mistakes; . . . ."

if that is what we expect prayer to do, then Tennyson is wrong, his lines are false, there is little use in praying. Prayer that rubs God as though He were an Alladin's Lamp is worthless. It is a sorry day for prayer when men use it as a means of imposing their petty wills upon God or selfishly gratifying their whims and fancies. Prayer has no such use. But there are some ways to use prayer so that life can be enriched and the world saved. Let me suggest several of these:

First of all, prayer is the best means that we have of *communing with a personal God.* Real prayer is an occasion when we have fellowship with God as a Father and Friend. Carlyle

defined prayer as "the aspiration of our poor, struggling, heavy laden soul toward its Eternal Father." It is an occasion when God's spirit reaches into our souls, and our spirits reach out to God. To be sure, one does not achieve this communion with God the first time he prays. Brother Laurence practiced the presence of God in prayer for ten years before he achieved this communion. Nor does one practice the presence of God in prayer for ten years and then achieve fellowship with God the first five minutes that he prays. Jesus had to pray all night. Nor does one practice the presence of God in prayer for fifteen years all night at a time and then achieve communion with God if one does not pray intelligently and skillfully. Prayer is an instrument of Communion with God just as a violin is an instrument of music. No one plays a violin well the first time he tries; no one *EVER* plays a violin well if he does not learn how to play. The same thing is true of praying. We must not call prayer useless as a means of knowing God if we never take the time, patience, and effort to learn how to use it.

Those who have learned to pray, as Kreisler learned to use his violin, testify without exception that prayer brings them into communion with God. Some people testify that while seeking something else in prayer, they have prayed so truly that they have found God instead of what they were praying for. There was Mrs. Calvin Coolidge. When her son lay dying, she prayed that his life might be spared. In her anguish, how she really prayed. She prayed so truly that she found God, even though she lost her son, as she testified on the fifth anniversary of his passing:

"You, my son,
Have shown me God.
Your kiss upon my cheek
Has made me feel the gentle touch
Of Him who leads us on.

And when you went before
You left the gates of Heaven ajar
That I might glimpse,
Approaching from afar
The glories of God's grace."

God's richest answer to prayer is not that which we seek in

prayer but rather the fellowship of God, himself. Wouldn't you travel a long way to see God? Wouldn't you pay a high admission charge to hear Him speak in Town Hall? You don't need to do that. You can experience God by learning how to pray.

In the second place, we can use prayer as a means of *power*. Alexis Carrel, speaking as a scientist, declared that prayer is the most powerful form of energy that one can generate, the influence of which on the human mind and body is as demonstrable as that of secreting glands. The effect of prayer, he goes on to say, can be measured in terms of increased physical buoyancy, greater intellectual vigor, moral stamina, and a deeper understanding of the realities underlying human relationships.

How does prayer do all this? Prayer links our lives with a spiritual world which we as yet do not understand but of which we find abundant evidence. There is so much that we do not know or understand in this world, but we go on using it beneficially for all of that. We should do the same with prayer. Twenty-five years ago, Thomas Edison said:

> *"We don't know the millionth part of one per cent about anything. We don't know what water is. We don't know what light is. We don't know what gravitation is. We don't know what enables us to keep on our feet when we stand up. We don't know what electricity is. We don't know what heat is. We don't know anything about magnetism. We have a lot of hypotheses about these things, but that is all. But we do not let our ignorance about all these things deprive us of their use."*

By the same token, why should we let our ignorance of prayer stop us acquiring the spiritual power which it can bring us. Alcoholics pray, and we see them stay sober. That is the power of prayer. Abraham Lincoln, praying constantly during the darkest days of the war between the states said:

> *"Without the assistance of that Divine Being Who attends me, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail."*

That is the power of prayer. Long ago Archimedes said, "Give me a place to stand, and I will lift the world." Kierkegaard,

the Danish theologian, made this comment on Archimedes' statement: "The Archimedean point outside the world is the little chamber where a true suppliant prays in all sincerity--where he lifts the world off its hinges." That is the power of prayer. Of course, prayer does not give us outward power--only power within. It can't make us wealthy, only wise; it can't lighten our burdens, only help us bear them; it can't give us things to enjoy better life, only better life to enjoy things. Prayer is inner power which makes us masters rather than slaves of the world around us.

Finally, prayer is a way *to turn our lives over to God when all is otherwise lost*. A year ago, a physician said to a patient, "Science has done all that it can for you. It will take a miracle to do the rest." And lo, the praying patient, securing his miracle, recovered. Such incidents, experienced by people as practical, honest, and intelligent as Eddie Rickenbacker, are legion.

To be sure, some people blinded by the world of cause and effect where everything is subject to natural law, will say that miracles are only coincidences. Strange, isn't it, that people who fly in airplanes in spite of the law of gravity don't think God can ever do anything in spire of natural law. It is always a coincidence when God does it. Of course, it is a coincidence when something unusual happens at just the time and place that it needs to happen. A miracle is always a coincidence. But let us not forget that coincidences may also be miracles, for it is not natural for circumstances to go together in a way and at a time when we desperately need them to do so. Who has a right to say that it is not an answer to prayer when the coincidences that need to take place, take place for no apparent reason, except that someone was praying?

During World War II one of our chaplains stationed at Guadalcanal went for a ride in a patrol plane. For some reason, the plane flew out of fuel and was forced down on a Japanese-held island. It was nearly dusk so they were safe from detection until daylight the following morning. "Padre" said the pilot of the plane, "you better start praying for gasoline." The chaplain did pray. During the night, for some unknown reason, the pilot was awakened and prompted to walk down to the beach where he found, rolling in on the tide, a drum half filled with gasoline. Christian people, members of

the church, are you surprised? Are you surprised that more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of?

oooOooo

If any lift of mine may ease
The burden of another,
God, give me love and care and strength
To help my ailing brother.

--Author Unknown.

Across the centuries the Church has emphasized the need of love. Yet one of the most astonishing things that confront us as we look out into our confused world is the appalling lack of love. Many of the ills of today can be traced to this dearth of love in human society.

Doctors, psychiatrists and scientists have found tangible proof for what the Church has so long been preaching. It is frankly acknowledged that a large percentage of mental, emotional and sociological illnesses is due to lovelessness. A distinguished psychologist has written, "Yes, the scientists are trying to catch up with Jesus. He had man's future welfare in mind when He said two thousand years ago, 'Love one another.'"

Love, as the word is used by the Church and the scientist, is not possessiveness; it is not exploitation. It is affirmation of one's own dignity and integrity, and of the dignity and integrity of other persons. It is, in the Christian sense, bouldless and courageous good-will. If the problems of today are to be solved, it will be when enough men and women recognize the importance of love in life, and learn to give it and receive it.

--Rex Stowers Clements

P R A Y E R:

Heavenly Father, help us to realize that more than anything else, our world needs Christian love. May we heed the sane, sound, scientific words of Jesus: "Love one another." Amen.

oooOooo

THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

By Grenville Kleiser

I AM the secret of health and happiness.
I AM the inspiration of youth and the solace of old age.
I AM always available.
I AM invincible and eternal.
I AM the antidote for crime, poverty, cruelty and fear.
I AM the conqueror of disease, despotism, and despair.
I AM the healer of hatred, sin, and injustice.
I AM the co-partner of truth and righteousness.

I AM the remedy for the world's wants, wars, and woes.
I AM the builder of churches, chapels, and cathedrals.
I AM the guide of preachers, prophets, and poets.
I AM the creator of lofty music, pictures, and architecture.
I AM the handservant of faith, mercy, and charity.
I AM the fulfilling of the law.
I AM the greatest thing in the world.
I AM LOVE.

oooOooo

FOR TROUBLOUS TIMES

By Mary Scudder McDermott

Lord, in Thee our fathers trusted; in Thee hoped and to Thee prayed.
In that confidence abiding, faced all hardships unafraid,
Recognized Thy love and justice, knew Thee One to be obeyed.

Pardon, Lord, their blundering children, heritors of this good land.
Wealth and ease of life betrayed us; we grew deaf to Thy command,
Greedily we held our treasure--saw it not as from Thy hand.

If with contrite hearts we seek Him, He is never far away;
Plead for help in the world's trouble; He will hear us when we pray.
More than bread or work or comfort, need we God with us today.

(Observed by Mrs. A. M. Davison)

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PRAYER AS A PRACTICAL POWER IN LIFE'S EMERGENCIES

By W. J. Thompson, D. D.

In the volume of mail coming to me daily, I receive many requests for prayer to help certain individuals meet emergencies of various kinds. Here is a letter from a young man about to take an examination for an important position. He asks me to pray for his success. Of course, prayer will do little for such a person if he does not do his part in the matter, and study thoroughly for the test awaiting him. But if he works hard and prepares carefully and then depends on God for help, he can feel sure of Divine assistance.

In college classrooms and in church conferences I frequently used this quotation:

"What you can do for yourself, God will never do;
What you cannot do for yourself, God will do for you!"

Where there is complete cooperation between the human and the Divine, miracles happen in these modern days!

Another letter comes from a woman facing a dangerous operation asking that I remember her before the Throne of Grace. I can answer that request by assuring my correspondent that God is nearest when most needed, as I quote:

"Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee." (Isaiah 41:10)

"The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deuteronomy 33:27)

This is much more than a soothing comment -- for it is the Word of God, containing His Divine Promise of assistance and support!

Here is a mother worried about a son who is far away. The feeling has come to her that he is in danger, and she writes to me, almost apologetically, asking if I think she suffers from hallucinations or if I consider her justified in seeking Divine aid. I can reply to this dear mother that she is wise in responding to the urge to pray, for such desires are

timed by the Holy Spirit to coincide with some actual need!

A well-known Salvation Army leader tells us his eldest son, in company with other young people, was flying back to the United States after attending an International Youth Congress. Two hundred miles out at sea from Ireland, one of the plane's engines caught fire and was not noticed until within a few minutes of exploding the gasoline. All the youthful passengers were asleep; the Salvation Army leader and his wife - thousands of miles away - were awakened and felt an urgent call to pray for their boy. At that moment two of the boys on the plane suddenly awoke and reported the flame to the pilot. He "feathered the prop," cut the engine and side-slipped the plane just in time to extinguish the blaze before the flash point of the high octane gas had been reached! All on Board were saved, and later returned to The States!

One writes:

"I cannot tell why there should come to me
A thought of someone far away
In swift insistence on the memory--
Unless there be the need to pray!

Perhaps just then my friend had special need
Of strength and guidance on life's way,
Or sought from some great peril to be freed--
I feel his need--and so I pray!

Friend, do the same for me if in your thought
I come unasked some busy day;
And so, by this strange experience taught,
Come to my aid--and quickly pray!"

In my own life I recall a thrilling experience demonstrating this truth. Years ago while serving as pastor of a church in a great city, I was invited to preach on Sunday afternoons to a large group of handicapped people. The institution where they lived and worked was near my church, and I came to know them well and to love them. Their appreciation was inspiring, and so it was a joy to serve them in spiritual matters. One Sunday afternoon - about two hours before the time of their church service - I felt a strange desire to go to the institution immediately! This seemed so unnecessary as I planned to go there to conduct a service for

them within two hours. Still the overwhelming urge came over me, so I knelt and prayed for God's guidance. I rose to my feet with a feeling that there was not a moment to spare. I actually ran most of the way to that institution, and if I had been asked to explain the reason for my haste, I would have been unable to give a "reasonable" explanation!

As I hurried through the gates, I felt led to go to someone I had tried to help previously, and as I entered the room, with only a split-second to take action, I noticed a figure standing with an upraised bottle, about to drink something! My hand shot out and sent the bottle smashing across the room, and a human life was saved from self-destruction.

The next instant a sobbing voice cried, "Thank God, you've come!" My comment seemed irrelevant: "I was not mistaken. It was real, after all."

Whatever others may think of Divine Guidance, I know it is a marvelous fact; and so, when men and women, and young people turn to me for counsel and guidance, and ask me about prayer as a practical power in life's emergencies, and the proof of God's presence in answer to personal needs, I can answer them, not out of human wisdom, but out of God's Divine Love, and Light, and Leadership!

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MIRACLES HAPPEN!

When on our way the shadows fall,
And every road seems barred,
God's miracles can open all
The doors we find too hard!

Though we are weak, our Lord is strong,
Divine Love holds us fast,
The fact that we to Him belong
Means we will win at last!

Not only in days long ago,
But in this present hour,
Miracles happen, this we know--
God still reveals His Power!

--W. J. Thompson, D. D.

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AN ANCIENT RELIGION

Over the past four years Fellowship in Prayer has published brief articles on the following religions:

Christianity	Buddhism
Islam	Taoism
Hinduism	Moism
Judiasm	Baha'i
Confucianism	Sikhism

These articles have been written by people either within the religion itself or by an authority thereon. Many people have expressed their interest in this idea as it has brought about a better understanding of the similarities between world faiths.

In this issue, we are privileged to print a statement on Zoroastrianism written especially for Fellowship in Prayer by a friend in India.

This ancient religion was conceived long before the Christrian era, but includes attributes which later Jesus Christ advocated. While Zoroaster was living he saw to it that, as a religion, it maintained its purity of purpose. Upon his death, however, (and not unlike the situation which developed in Taoism in China upon the death of its founder) others stepped in and diluted the high monotheism and severe moral idealism which Zoroaster made central in his teachings.

It is the same old time-proven story that seemingly man cannot maintain the pure teachings of any religion.

Above all, the purity of all religion should be maintained. The statement that religion is made for man and not man for religion is a conversion of Christ's reference to the Sabbath Day which is hardly a parallel.

Changes in religion have come about largely through man's ignorance or cupidity, which clearly proves his unfitness to make alterations in things of the Spirit. Herein lies the eternal values which do not change under the influence of man's microscopic search. Truth changes not! It is the contortion of truth which ruins development of the spirit.

We must return to the purity of our religious faiths if we are to save the world.

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Z O R O A S T R I A N I S M

Zoroastrianism, the religion of ancient Persia (then known as Iran) takes its name after the Prophet Zoroaster. It was the first religion to avow strongly and successfully monotheism in marked contrast to the prevailing idolatry of that age.

Prophets are gods in flesh, and Zoroaster was such a man-god. His date of birth is placed anywhere between 600 B.C. and 6000 B. C. But 800 to 1000 B. C. would be more or less a correct estimate. The Iranians had in their home land several gods of the Indo-Iranian pantheon, but the new religion propounded by Zoroaster emphasized the existence of only one God named "AHURA MAZDA." This collocation means literally "The hard wisdom" or "The wise hard" (History of Zoroastrianism by M. N. Dhalla, Oxford University Press, New York 1938, page 30). Just as Ahura Mazda was the embodiment of all that is good and divine "Angra Mainyu" was the Evil Spirit (Angra means Evil and Mainyu means Spirit).

The principles of Zoroastrianism can be summed up into Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds. The religious books, prominent being, Gathas, Vendidad, Zend-Avesta, not only contain religious matters and prayers but also sacred love, astronomy, medicine, physics and chemistry, moral precepts and ceremonial rituals. The languages originally used were either Avdsta, Pazend, or Pahlavi depending upon the time when they were written. Unfortunately most of the original works were lost when Iran was invaded by Alexander and later on by Arabs.

Zoroastrianism remained as the religion of Persia from 800 B. C. to the seventh century A. D. when Persians fell before the Mohammedan forces. Today, a small minority, amongst India's millions known as Parsees, still follow this old religion. The Parsees spread throughout the world number approximately one hundred thousand. A great majority of them are in Bombay city and state of India.

Very often, the Parsees are called "fire worshippers" but that is as good as saying that Roman Catholics are "cross worshippers." Fire has always been the symbol of good, the giver of light and warmth - a tangible symbol of God's existence and benevolence. The rituals emphasize pur-

ity, hence fresh fruits, flowers, milk and specially cooked food are used in religious ceremonies.

Today, the Zoroastrian religion does not accept any converts and in the last century children of mixed marriages were not taken into the cult. However, after a leading law suit at the beginning of this century, it was decided to admit only the children of the Zoroastrian father and a non-Zoroastrian mother, but the children of a Zoroastrian mother who marries a non-Zoroastrian are still debarred. A child is admitted into the cult after a ceremony called "Navjot" (meaning the "new entrant") is performed. This ceremony takes place between the ages of 7 and 14. The child is vested with a white shirt and a sacred thread spun from white lamb's wool is tied around the waist. The white shirt symbolizes purity and is like an armour to ward off evil. The thread symbolizes a waist band to hold weapons like a sword or a dagger to fight evil forces and is made of lamb's wool to emphasize meekness.

The method of disposing of the dead is one of the most interesting and a much publicized ritual. The Zoroastrians who believe in keeping fire, earth, water and other elements pure and free from pollution, put their dead in a cylindrical and roofless house, specially constructed, where vultures eat away the flesh and the bones turn into ashes through the effects of sun, rain and wind.

The foregoing is a brief description of one of the most interesting religions in the world, which has seen ups and downs but has always stood steadfast by the cardinal virtues of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds -- few and simple words containing a world of wisdom.

* * *

ZOROASTRIAN PRAYER:

I offer to thee, O Ahura-Mazda, (God) sacrifices of all kinds. Mayest thou, O all-powerful, all-wise one, rule over thy creatures, over all waters and trees, all empires and dominions, causing fertility, happiness, and universal justice to abound in the world. In all conflicts between light and darkness, between the good and the bad, let the right prevail, O thou king of righteousness.

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BROTHERHOOD THROUGH LOVE

Years ago a young widow of but a few months from marriage in England, returned to America, the land of her birth. Time hung like a pall of lead until opportunity came to adopt a baby girl, which she did. Naturally, every attention was bestowed upon the child and, possessing plenty of means, no need of the child was denied. Both grew together into the fondest of relations until the bond of affection seemed to overflow.

When Anne turned six, "mommy's" sister came for an extended visit and the three found it wholly agreeable--so much so that one day Anne confided to her aunt that she wanted to get something for "mommy" she loved her that deeply and wished to show her affection in some tangible way. A shopping tour with her aunt did not prove very satisfactory and in something of a hopeless mood Anne said, "It is so hard to get anything good enough for mommy."

Piloting the way back to the car the aunt finally said, "You have spoken a great truth, Anne, in your words about buying something good enough for mommy. Love and affection are not expressed in 'things'. *LOVE* is best returned with *LOVE*. *Your* greatest gift will be the giving of *YOURSELF* in service, loyalty and devotion to your mother. You are placed in a most fortunate position and have a great chance to show your love in many ways which will develop day by day."

Being a child of unusual understanding, every word was understood and remembered. Later years tested this love through sickness and death, but it never faltered.

Of course, this is personal love so often based upon individual charms or attractive personalities. It can, and often does, broaden out to encompass groups and even mankind. All of us know of someone or more possessing a passion for men's souls and their welfare. These people are inspired largely by the example of Jesus Christ whose life was a gospel of love.

It is in this wide field that the need of love is of first importance today and the question is asked repeatedly, "How is progress in this category to be made with religious conditions and attitudes as they are now throughout the world?" It is admitted that it is almost a superhuman task, which can only be accomplished through the Grace of God working in the

hearts of people.

Sincere intelligent prayer is the keystone of this entire structure and enough people must meet on this high level to save mankind. You would be surprised to know the number of people who realize the difficulties involved because they know and have seen the bigotry, ignorance and prejudice which prevail between sects and people of very small differences of belief.

In the case of Christianity, for instance, the 1954 World Almanac lists 242 divisions, some of major importance, others with slight differences. Christ came to establish a brotherhood of love on earth--but still we cling to our narrow interpretation of His teachings, in some cases, making a brotherhood impossible.

There is a definite possibility of developing an understanding between other faiths, with prayer as a basis, and thus inaugurate a spiritual regeneration. This seems the only feasible means for stirring up sufficient initiative to strike deep into the hearts of individuals.

We may build organizations without number, but unless the people who make up the organizations have a change of heart, no progress will be made. And this change of heart must recognize all men as brethren!

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HANDS OF LOVE

Hands

That are

Moved by love,

Weave tapestries

Of peaceful living

For mankind's brotherhood.

--Zelma S. Dennis.

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CHRISTIANITY, OTHER RELIGIONS AND NON-RELIGION
(From "Re-Thinking Missions")

(Continued from December issue)

CHANGES IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS. While this slow change of attitude has been going on within the mission, the environment of other-religion has itself undergone momentous changes. The Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism of today are not those of a hundred years ago.

They have been stirred, and no doubt stung, by the presence of an aggressively critical Christian movement. They have responded not merely by defensive argument or counter criticism, but by various movements of internal reform. Other reforms have been undertaken in entire independence of Christianity.

These religions have been further and more deeply shaken by all the events connected with the spread of World-culture. The scientific and critical temper of that culture is in a peculiar degree deadly to their authority. What becomes of the issues between the merits of one sacred text and another when the sacredness of all texts is being denied? Why compare Mohammed and Buddha, when all the utterances of religious intuition are threatened with discard in the light of practical reason? It is no longer, Which prophet? or Which book? It is whether any prophet, book, revelation, rite, church, is to be trusted. All the old oracles are seeing a new sign: the scorn on the faces of students who know the experiments in anti-religion in Russia and non-religion in Turkey, and the actual religionlessness of much western life. The chief foe of these oracles is not Christianity, but the anti-religious element of the philosophies of Marx, Lenin, Russell. The case that must now be stated is the case for any religion at all.

Those changes in the theological atmosphere which have affected us, come upon these religions far more abruptly, snatching them suddenly from the restful gloom of mediaeval discussions into the harsh demands of the utilitarian day. The ranks of students and initiates thin out. Here and there one detects a note of despair: can the re-orientation be accomplished so swiftly without disaster?

But these problems are not alone the problems of other religions. For since the same world-change has entered the sphere of the Christian Church and of the mission, they, too

must deal with their own question of life and death; they, too, must state the case for any religion at all. Thus it is that Christianity finds itself in point of fact aligned in this world-wide issue with the non-Christian faiths of Asia. It is an alignment which creates no new truths and solves no problems of religious difference. It simply shows how necessary it has become for every religion to be aware of and to stand upon the common ground of all religion.

CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP EMERGING. There are thus several factors conspiring to one end; namely, *the necessity that the modern mission make a positive effort, first of all to know and understand the religions around it, then to recognize and associate itself with whatever kindred elements there are in them.*

Vigorous beginnings of this process are now taking place in various parts of Asia. The following account of the opening of "A Venture in Understanding" will indicate better than any words of ours the sort of change, initiative and discovery that is involved:

"An effort that we are making in this direction here in Okayama is worthy of attention I believe, not so much for what it has accomplished as for the evidence it gives that a new attitude is developing. It has grown out of the belief that we all, Christians, Buddhists, Shintoists, or whatever other faith, have much to learn from each other and much to contribute to each other. Also we feel that if we spiritual leaders are to accomplish anything constructive for the good of society as a whole we ought first to get together as religionists and come to know each other sympathetically.

"With the conviction that this could be done, I set out first, **then, simply to get acquainted** with some of the best representatives of the several religious sects that were operating in our city or its immediate vicinity. I called first on the leading priest of the Shin sect, visiting him in his temple, where we had a delightful conference together for two hours or more regarding the deeper spiritual values of our lives. We had not gone far in our talk together before it became evident to me that here, so far as I was concerned, was an unworked mine of spiritual possibilities, and, so far as he was concerned, a readiness, yes, a hunger for something more than he had yet got. Thinking there must be others like him also, I at length, with some hesitation,

suggested the possibility and the desirability of our getting together, a few earnest spirits of us from the different sects of the several religions represented in the community, with the frank and avowed purpose of sharing with each other as friends the deepest spiritual experiences of our lives as they had come to us through our several religious faiths. The suggestion met with his instant approval, and thereupon we together formulated a plan and made out a list of those who might well be brought into such a group. They must be kindred spirits, not argumentative, not intrenched in prejudice, for all discussions must be on the plane of experience rather than of dogmatism or theory, and there must be no furtive effort at propaganda. Everyone must be honest with himself, no surrendering his faith or softening down his convictions, but outspoken and sincere, holding to what he believed to be the truth and ready to declare it, and yet maintaining a tolerant and open mind. Those were hard conditions to fulfill, so our men had to be chosen carefully. But we made out our list; one each from five of the leading Buddhist sects in Japan, since all happened to have representatives in Okayama,--Shinshu, Shingon, Zen, Tendai, and Nichiren,--and besides them, one pure Shintoist and three Christians of whom one is a well-known pastor and social worker, one a prominent layman, equally well-known and respected, and myself, an American missionary.

"I then proceeded, as I found time, to call on the men whom we had listed, visiting each in his temple or home or office, and in every case I was most cordially received, everyone of them with undisguised enthusiasm acceding to our invitation to join the group."

(To be continued nest issue)

oooOooo

P R A Y E R:

"O grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell, but Thy pure love alone;
O may Thy love possess me whole,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown;
Strange fires far from my soul remove;
My every act, word, thought, be love." Amen.

oooOooo

You will find as you look back on your life that the moments that stand out above everything else are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love.

--Henry Drummond.

oooOooo

L O V E

Thou art the bird in the nest,
The flight, the song.
Thou art the gentle breeze,
The wind so strong.
Thou art the bud, the flower,
The fragrance sweet,
Thou art the sky above,
The earth beneath my feet.

Thou art the gleam of dawn,
The setting sun,
Thou art my heart's deep peace,
When day is done.
Thou art the rippling stream,
The ocean's roar,
Thou art the still small voice
That calls me evermore.

And bids me not to seek afar,
Nor to embrace an ancient creed,
But worship at Thy Beauty's shrine,
Finding in Thee my only need.
For Thou art Love, the Inner Light,
Shining in darkness thru the night.
The Love in every heart concealed,
Waiting Thy Touch alone to be revealed.

--Mabel Burlingham.

oooOooo

P R A Y E R:

Lord God of Light and Truth

who art real beyond all other reality, and who art seeking, at this very moment, to illuminate our minds with a new understanding--to cheer our hearts with a fresh energy of devotion

Lift us above the misty places where we so often dwell, where the clouds rise up and cover the stars, and hide the sun itself, and keep our spirits from knowing Thee.

Set us free from the narrowness of our thoughts, the pettiness and poverty of our ways of thinking about Thee.

Deliver us from the despotism of our own desires, as we seek to mould Thy will according to our momentary wishes.

Grant that we look not with the eye of time upon the things of eternity, nor dwarf with our small measure the vastness of things that belong unto Thee, nor mar by our poor vision Thy beauty, which is the beauty of holiness.

--By Theodore Carswell Hume.
(Used by permission of--
Dr. and Mrs. Edward H. Hume)

oooOooo

There are enough Christians in the world to solve the major problems of the race if all Christendom would cease praying as we teach children to pray and begin really and unitedly to pray as Christlike men. The style and diction of conventional mature praying is full of ches. We keep begging "Lord, help," "we beseech thee," "give," "grant," "teach us," "encourage us," "be merciful," etc., as if God needed to be informed and changed, forgetting that he knows all and is trying to do all we ask before we can ask him. We seem blind to the fact that God will do his part in the process as soon as we comply with the corresponding condition, that is, make the proper response.

(From WE PRAY THEE, LORD
By Roy Wallace Thomas)

A GLANCE AHEAD

United prayer toward a religious regeneration is essential and enough has been done to indicate a definite trend toward deeper spiritual thinking.

Fellowship in Prayer has had a large part in this forward religious development and takes pride in what has been accomplished. But the goal has not been attained and the task is stupendous! It could be more rapidly achieved through a change of heart by many lukewarm believers.

Leaders in every faith should have an opportunity to participate in a united prayer program. This means that the idea must be conveyed to every pastor, priest, rabbi and the like. Many now participate and more will!

Every college and private educational institution should be circularized so that faculty and students will have an equal chance to cooperate. Doctors, lawyers, and kindred professions, should be included and cultivated. Some businessmen will want to participate, out of which broader assistance may develop.

In fact, every field of life should be covered and will be when means are available. The cost of printing and postage runs into money to-day, but the investment certainly should be satisfying in such a worthwhile undertaking.

During the past year the development of Fellowship in Prayer has been more than three and a half times that of the first fifteen months--months filled with drive and urgency in launching a new undertaking in the name of our Creator.

Meanwhile, every effort is being made to raise the quality of the publication, both as to printing - which is done in our office - and content, but the goal is still higher.

* * *

Before us is a letter, just received, which contains the following unsoliticted statement:

> "There are many magazines dealing with spiritual themes, but 'FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER' appeals to me as outstanding in the high quality of its messages--and in its spiritual helpfulness. God bless you and your associates in their unique ministry."

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A P P R E C I A T I O N

"LOVE" is the outstanding thought for this month Aside from appreciation to our Contributing Editors, gratitude is due all those sending in the following contributions:

Verse on Front Cover - *Sent in by Miss Lelia Robertson*

A PSALM OF THE NEW YEAR - By Mildred Long

FOR TROUBLOUS TIMES - By Mary Scudder McDermott *(Observed by Mrs. A.M.Davison)*

PRAYER AS A PRACTICAL POWER IN LIFE'S EMERGENCIES - By Dr. W. J. Thompson

HANDS OF LOVE - By Zelma S. Dennis

LOVE - By Mabel Burlingham

PRAYER - By Theodore Carswell Hume *(By courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Edward H. Hume)*

Message and Prayer - From THE SPIRITUAL DIARY *By Mrs. Bennie Caroline Hall*

CHRISTIANITY, OTHER RELIGIONS AND NON-RELIGION - From RE-THINKING MISSIONS *By permission of Dr. William Ernest Hocking.*

oooOooo

B O O K S

CHANGE YOUR LIFE THROUGH PRAYER - a book which really makes one want to pray. Forthright, clear, positive; no situation in life resists the practice of prayer. Most of the experiences quoted are under the personal observation of the author and form convincing illustrations of the efficacy of prayer. By following Stella Terrill Mann's leadership surely "Prayer Can Change The World." Price $2.00 - 150 pp - Dodd, Mead & Company, 432 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

TRY GIVING YOURSELF AWAY - As mentioned in the last issue of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, this is a very compelling book and well worth anybody's study and practice. Price $2.50 - The Updegraff Press, Ltd., Scarsdale, N. Y.

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N O T I C E S

The birthdays of two of our greatest Presidents occur in February. Washington and Lincoln seem to have been moulded into the exact requirements of the times when they held office. We pause to pay tribute to these men, who, down through the years, have been eulogized far more ably than lies within our limited powers.

The Week of Prayer in January was widely observed in the Protestant Church. The 1954 World Day of Prayer, sponsored by United Church Women, will be observed on March 5th.

It is with pleasure that we welcome Mrs. Bennie Caroline Hall as a Fellowship advisor in the New York area. Mrs. Hall is a gifted writer and is editor of "The Spiritual Diary." She is deeply interested in Fellowship in Prayer and already has rendered valuable assistance. We feel honored in having her splendid help and cooperation.

Fellowship in Prayer owes a deep debt of gratitude to Mrs. Helen Dudley Young for her wholehearted assistance in the sale of Christmas cards so artistically designed by her. Proceeds from the large quantity of cards which she sold also benefitted "We Walk Again"--the polio chiropractic organization of which she is president.

We have a number of copies of our "hand book" available which are convenient in passing out to friends. As many as desired will be mailed, free of charge, upon request.

The subscription rate for FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER is $2.00 per year. The objective of the organization is as follows:

> *"To promote th e practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind."*

Gifts toward furthering these aims will be gratefully received and promptly acknowledged.

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BE AN OPTIMIST

Be an optimistic optimist,
No matter how you feel;
If doubt or gloom assails you,
Work on with greater zeal.
Think always of the sunshine
Behind the lowering sky;
You can rise above depression,
If you let ill-thought go by.

The pessimistic pessimist
Sits complaining all the while,
Unhappily he does not know
The face-value of a smile.
What you think within your heart
Will shape your life each day;
The antidote for worry
Is to smile dull care away.

It is better to be pleasant
Than to wear a frowning face;
All good things work together
To promote a happy race.
Be an optimistic optimist,
Ignore depressing things;
The man that wins life's prizes
Is the man who smiles and sings.

--Grenville Kleiser.

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